United Nations

Press Release

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Chairman of Palestinian Rights Committee expresses "apprehension and deep concern" at possible tragic impact of war in Persian Gulf on Palestinians' safety and protection.

- Côte d'Ivoire requests meeting of Security Council to address deteriorating economic and social situation in Liberia.

- Member countries of the United Nations owe the Organization over $402 million in outstanding contributions from last year, according to latest status of contributions report.

- Director-General of World Health Organization calls on member States to increase their net contributions to proposed programme budget for 1992-1993 by approximately 21 per cent.

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The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), has called for the urgent attention of the Secretary-General to what she terms "the growing dangers faced by the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem".

In a letter addressed to Mr. Perez de Cuellar, she expressed the Committee's "apprehension and deep concern" at the possible tragic impact of a war in the Gulf on for the Palestinians' safety and protection.

She referred to an urgent appeal of a non-governmental organization, the Palestine Human Rights Information Centre of the Arab Studies Society at Jerusalem, which stated that there were indications that a mass transfer of Palestinians could be carried out in the event of war.

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For information media—not an official record

She appealed urgently to the Secretary-General and all concerned to take immediately all necessary action to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

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Côte d'Ivoire has requested a meeting of the Security Council to address the deteriorating economic and social situation in Liberia.

In a letter, dated 15 January, to the Council President, the Chargé d'affaires of Côte d'Ivoire attached the text of a draft statement by the Council President. By the statement, the members of the Council would call upon the parties to the conflict in Liberia to continue to respect the cease-fire agreement which they signed and to co-operate fully with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to restore peace and normalcy in Liberia. The Council would also call upon the international community to actively support the peace process in Liberia and would welcome the resumption of United Nations relief assistance in Liberia following the acceptance of a general cease-fire.

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Member countries of the United Nations owe the Organization over $402 million in outstanding contributions from last year, according to the latest figure. The largest debtor continues to be the United States, with nearly $300 million overdue. Statistics also indicate that the number of countries that have paid their dues in full by the end of the year have decreased in the last three years, from 86 in 1988 to 67 last year.

The peace-keeping budget, which is separate, faces a shortfall of over $346 million from the past year.

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Addressing the eighty-seventh session of the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board in Geneva on Monday, its Director-General, Hiroshi Nakajima, said he was obliged to call on member States to increase their net contributions to the agency's working budget for the 1992-1993 programme by approximately 21 per cent.

The regular working budget amounted to some $764 million, which represented zero growth in real terms for the fifth consecutive biennium, he said. It was necessary to raise that amount because of unforseeable inflation and currency exchange rate fluctuations, and declines in available casual income.

Mr. Nakajima said he had endeavoured to continue to fulfil the mandate of the agency in pursuit of the goal of health for all, while taking into account the changing political, economic and social conditions of the 1990s.

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He stressed that the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993 was a "transitional" one, which began to reflect the new strategies called for by the last decade. In many countries of the world, Mr. Nakajima said, the shift towards more market-oriented economies and pluralistic systems, and the greater focus on human rights, as well on social equity, meant that old ways of planning, organizing and financing health systems no longer provided a sufficiently reliable model. World-wide inflation and recession, including a decline in export commodity prices, had resulted in competition for limited financial resources, in which health was receiving a smaller and smaller share, the Director-General said.

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